IMPROVING THE ORAL ENGLISH SKILLS OF CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS

THROUGH INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP

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Abstract

Chinese college students, as one of the primary groups of learners of English in China, face difficulties in developing spoken English. This paper examined the literature on difficulties of Chinese college students in oral English learning and suggested a blended learning approach for improving Chinese college students' oral English proficiency. Blended approach is a learner-centered method that combines complementing face-to-face and online learning experiences to achieve learning goals, which is widely used in teaching. This thesis project provided ideas for a workshop for instructors of Chinese college students to learn about the challenges Chinese college students face when studying spoken English and ways to help students enhance their spoken English skills.

Key Words: Chinese college students, Oral English, Blended learning

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family who has encouraged and supported me throughout my

graduation studies.

Acknowledgments

I am very thankful to Dr. King for her consistent and patient assistance in completing my thesis. Without her assistance, I would be unable to complete this paper. Furthermore, I am appreciative to the Greensboro College TESOL team for providing a high-quality education.

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Chapter 1

Leaving China to work and study abroad is one of the most valuable experiences of my life. The reason why I can leave China to work and study abroad is because I have mastered a very important communication tool, which is English. To be honest, I could not speak English until the first year of university; although, I knew some English vocabulary and grammar. Among Chinese college students, there are many college students who have the same situation as me. As a beneficiary of learning English, I would like to explore and help Chinese college students who want to speak English based on my own experience of learning oral English.

English is the most widely used language today (Ethnologue, 2021). Statistics indicate that, "English, as a second language, is currently the language with the most learners in the world. China has the largest population in learning English globally. There are estimated to be around 400 million Chinese people learning English" (Li, 2020). This is a larger number than the entire population of the United States. Standardized English language proficiency tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) now "have a speaking component that is crucial in determining a learner's level of language competency and knowledge. In 2018, the number of TOEFL test takers reached 300,000, ranking first in the world" (Wong, 2019). The number of English learners continues to grow every year.

All four skills of the English language, namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing are now developed with equal importance in building communicative competence (Jabeen,

2016). For Chinese college English learners, the development levels of these four skills are extremely uneven. Listening and reading skills are better than speaking and writing skills, of which speaking is the most difficult (Peng, 2014). Many college English learners have been learning English for many years, but still can not speak a few words and cannot communicate with people in English. These college students usually master a certain vocabulary and are familiar with a lot of grammar. Some of them can get good scores on the exams, but when they encounter speaking English, they often have problems. My purpose of writing this thesis is to find out the reasons why these college students have difficulty in speaking English, and to explore the methods for college students to break through oral English.

To gain a deeper understanding of ESL speaking instructions to Chinese students, the present study was set up to research the following questions:

a. What are the factors affecting Chinese college students' learning of oral English?

b. What pedagogical practices have been identified in the literature for use in developing Chinese college students' oral English proficiency?

c. How should we implement proven pedagogical approaches into practice to assist Chinese college students in improving their English-speaking proficiency?

To answer the above questions, a project with three workshops will be made which will answer the questions separately. During this project, a systematic review of the TESOL program will be conducted focusing on such courses as The Pedagogy of TESOL, Practicum in Pedagogy and L2 Classroom Discourse. For question one, finding and analyzing the factors that affect college students' oral English learning are essential. This helps learners avoid unfavorable factors and use favorable factors to learn and master English speaking skills. For questions two and

three, summarizing existing pedagogical practices will help improve their English-speaking

proficiency.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Factors Influencing Chinese College Students' Oral English Learning

According to Jabeen (2016), English language learning is a comprehensive and complex process that requires continuous input from learners. To acquire communicative competence, the four skills of the English language, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing, should be cultivated equally (p.1). However, for Chinese college students, the development of these four skills in English is extremely uneven. Peng (2014) explained that speaking is the most difficult skill for Chinese college students. There is no doubt that there are many factors that contribute to the low proficiency of spoken English in Chinese college students.

This chapter reviews some of the existing literature on topics related to factors influencing Chinese college students' oral English learning. More specifically, the topics that have been explored here are, firstly, the issues in Chinese college students with low English oral proficiency, including students' own internal reasons, external reasons, and language reasons. Secondly, the chapter reviews literature on pedagogical approaches in practice to assist Chinese college students in improving their English-speaking proficiency. The review of these studies has helped in identifying the difficulties and approaches to Chinese college students' oral English proficiency.

Issues surrounding Chinese college students' low English oral proficiency

There are many reasons for the low proficiency of Chinese college students' spoken English. Amoah & Yeboah (2021) highlighted two category factors that inhibit speaking performances: linguistic, such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, and psychological anxiety, timidity and fear of mistakes. Besides, compared to integrative motivation, known as a desire, to learn L2 for pragmatic gains, they found that Chinese EFL learner's instrumental motivations are higher. According to Xing and Bolden (2019), "within Chinese English education, the oral component of English language learning is not perceived as important as reading, writing, and listening. China's English language testing system reflects this lack of importance" (p.837). Peng (2014) found that the national English curriculum of China specifically prerequisites for speaking, listening, reading, writing, and interpreting abilities are spelled out in great detail, according to Peng (2014),

> The practice of English teaching in China, however, over the past decades shows that those skills have not yet been developed well enough to match the huge amount of effort and time Chinese learners have been spending on this most useful language in the world. (p.16)

Peng stated that the high complexity of grammar and vocabulary in English also contributes to low proficiency in oral English as well.

Culture

Language and culture are closely linked. Languages are part of cultures, and cultures are expressed through languages. Understanding culturally related languages is often one of the difficulties for college students in English language learning (Guessabi, 2017). For example, when a native English speaker sneezes in front of others, they will often say: "Excuse me!" The

information recipients present will often say: "Bless you!" It is difficult for students without related cultural background to understand: why are their conversations like this? Why do you say, "Bless you!"? Another example is the American food culture. When it comes to "mac", people naturally say "cheese". When it comes to camping snacks, it is natural to think of "s'mores".

Duan and Yang (2016) explained that " persons who were not born and raised in the US, had great difficulty understanding culture-related information. When the professor explained a theory, he/she would use some examples. These examples were sometimes bound by culture" (p.48). In addition, cultural conflict also plays an important role in language expression, such as beliefs, customs, privacy, taboos, etc. Qian (2012) explained that due to cultural differences, Westerners might get furious, while Chinese people can grow depressed and decide to quit studying English to avoid conflicts. People must adjust to new culture and surroundings since culture is the carrier of a nation that cannot be lost gradually. One may avoid making blunders in life if they pay attention to cultural differences. Understanding of English culture can help improve English speaking skills.

Accent

English is widely used all over the world, and people in different regions usually have a certain accent when they speak English such as a Scottish accent, London accent, American accent, Indian accent, Chinese accent, etc. Knetemann (2018) wrote that "there are 160 distinct English dialects throughout the world". There are several distinct accents within mostly English-speaking nations such as the United States and England, as well as numerous distinct overseas English accents.

According to Duan and Yang (2016), "like the ESL students, ESL instructors usually have a foreign accent, and sometimes their accents cause difficulties for students" (p. 47). Similarly, Chinese college students also have a certain accent when they speak English. When the listener does not understand the speaker, the speaker is often asked to say it again. In this case, the speaker often loses their confidence. Because the speaker thinks that his/her English is not good and his/her pronunciation is not standard, so that the listener does not understand himself/herself. If this happens frequently, speaking English becomes a burden and even produces a sense of inferiority. Duan and Yang (2016) observed that the college students' accents are not problems when talking with teachers, but peers complained that their accents influenced their presentations in class because they could not understand them well. Lexical stress, as another key contributor, has a great influence on foreign accent as well as intelligibility of L2 speech (Yuan & Cheng, 2017).

Speed

Speed is another difficulty encountered by Chinese college students. Normally, when a college English professor speaks slowly, students can understand the professor well, but when the professor speaks faster, or at a natural rate, it is often difficult for college students to understand the meaning of the professor (Duan & Yang, 2016, p.48). It reflects how important the impact of speaking speed on college students is. It is because when Chinese college students understand English, in order to grasp what is being said, it is frequently necessary to pay closer attention to the speaker's words. Duan and Yang (2016) wrote that ESL learners sometimes get confused if the speaker talks too rapidly because of the decoding process that takes place while receiving information in a second language.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the important elements of college students' English communication. As stated in Teng (2015), vocabulary was categorized into two dimensions, including the breadth of vocabulary and the depth of vocabulary, the breadth of one's vocabulary knowledge is referred to as the vocabulary size, while the depth of one's vocabulary knowledge is referred to as the quality of one's understanding of a term. The knowledge of vocabulary is an essential part of mastering a language, and it influences whether college students can successfully communicate in oral English. Duan & Yang (2016) discovered when professors or classmates use new words, and those new words would cause great difficulties in understanding. In order to better understand the discourse between professors or classmates, they often look up dictionaries or use other tools such as the Internet.

Grammar

According to Duan and Yang (2016), "English and Chinese are from different language families and the way English is organized is different from the way Chinese is organized. English has a lot of grammar, such as morphology and syntax" (p.49). In order to speak English well, it is necessary to learn and master a certain amount of English grammar. Unlike Chinese, English has many clauses, long sentences, tenses, etc. Those are the difficulties of Chinese college students. Oral communication is very timely and often instantaneous. It does not wait for

the speaker to spend a lot of time organizing the morphology and syntax before speaking out. Duan and Yang (2016) found that in their study of Chinese speakers speaking English, that

> Sometimes they would realize the mistake they had made, but they did not have enough time to rearrange the sentences. They were trying to produce accurate sentences, which would make them pause a lot when they talked to others. And they were becoming less confident because of the pauses. (p. 49)

Wang and Pongpairoj (2021) indicated that EFL learners tend to avoid making difficult structures due to the distinctions between their native and target languages, or the absence of L2 features in their mother tongues.

Environment

Chinese college students have been studying and living in a Chinese environment for a long time. Many people have never been to a country with an English environment and have not even seen a few English-speaking foreigners. They have very limited contact with the English "environment", such as TV, movies, radio, and online news. Due to the long-term lack of an English environment, they rarely get the opportunity to speak English. In addition, almost all universities are local Chinese teachers teaching English in classrooms, and "there are no foreign teachers who can communicate with them in their daily life just like a pair of friends. It is so difficult for them to find a native speaker to practice every day." (Qian, 2012, p. 2204). The local English teachers use Chinese to teach English, and the teaching method is often a grammar-translation method, which lacks opportunities for English practice. College students can learn English through listening throughout the class and speaking English and learning English seem to be two unrelated things.

Anxiety

Occasionally, individuals might have spoken great English but were unable to open their mouths due to anxiety (Qian, 2012). Anxiety is described as the subjective sensations of tension, anxiety, uneasiness, and concern that occur in response to an autonomic nervous system activation (Spielberger,1972). Yu and Thompson (2021) stated that "second language anxiety is an emotional reaction that diminishes second language learners' academic performance" (p.14). Emotion, self-efficacy, and attitudes are the significant predictors of EFL learners' English communication. English second language learners will have varying degrees of anxiety when they are learning English. Dealing with these anxieties will help improve oral English.

Motivation

Liu (2007) studied if students were enthusiastic about studying English and were strongly driven to do so. In order to help non-English majors, retain or develop their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for studying English and ultimately increase their English competence, the institution may benefit from offering additional courses continuously throughout the university years for non-English majors. Hajimaghsoodi & Maftoon (2020) described Chinese EFL learners are driven to speak English for a variety of reasons, demonstrating the Chinese EFL learner's preference for instrumental motivation, a desire to learn L2 for pragmatic gains, over integrative motivation, a desire to speak with and become like respected people of that community (p. 66). They also suggested a list of suggestions:

1. Instructors or teachers should assist in the creation of an environment that is favorable to reducing feelings of nervousness or shyness. To establish a learning technique that fits all learners in the classroom, teachers must pay attention to each student's strengths and weaknesses.

2. Instructors or teachers should gather adequate ways to increase EFL learners' speaking confidence, such as regular oral presentations or classroom discussions. It will encourage EFL students to set aside time during the day to speak English, even when they are not in English classes. This will assist them in overcoming nervousness, the fear of making mistakes, and/or teacher or peer criticism.

3. Instructors will encourage learners to talk without fear or guilt by critically monitoring them and providing thoughtful criticism.

4. English debating organizations or societies should be fostered for EFL students. They motivate themselves by speaking with native English speakers, viewing native English movies, news, documentaries, Ted presentations, and so on, in order to establish a conducive environment for English oral fluency.

5. Teachers' efforts to reduce speaking inhibitions should not be limited to psychological issues. Students should be encouraged to devote time to reading literature, mastering grammar, pronunciation, and expanding their vocabulary.

Pedagogical approaches to assist Chinese college students in improving their English-speaking proficiency

In China, English as a second language is regulated as one of the subjects of college study. For English learning, many people have conducted extensive explorations, including spoken English, one of the difficulties of Chinese college students in English.

Combining Communicative Approach with Grammar-translation Method

"The teaching method commonly used in Chinese university classrooms is the grammar-translation method" (Shen, 2013, p. 817）, which is directly related to the curriculum, the number of students in the classroom, and especially the examination policy. Richards and Schmidt (2010) have defined the grammar-translation method as "a method of foreign or second language teaching which makes use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities" (p. 252). The grammar-translation method presents a special advantage in helping students learn grammar and vocabulary. Through this teaching method, students can master many vocabularies and grammar in oral English, but this is not particularly effective in helping students' oral English. Shen (2013) explained that no one teaching approach can cover all aspects of the target language's form, usage, and content, and that adequate grammatical analysis and restricted use of translation from or to the target language (English) are still essential components in teaching English.

Cooperative learning

Chen (2009) has described cooperative theory and approach that began in America at the middle 20th century and has been widely used and spread. In the 1990s, cooperative learning developed in China and became an efficient educational activity" (p.6). According to Chen (2009), cooperative learning has the following characteristics:

(1) Cooperative learning entails mostly group work.

(2) Collaborative learning entails collaborative work.

(3) Cooperative learning requires the leadership of a teacher.

(4) Collaborative learning places a premium on both group and individual accountability.

(5) Cooperative learning enables students to take the lead (p.6).

Cooperative learning is a common learning method in the classroom. In college oral classes, cooperative learning of oral English improves students' participation and increases students' opportunities to speak English. Cooperative learning could increase students' motivation in language learning. In the process of cooperation and learning, college students' spoken language strengthens their sense of responsibility, accepts more information, and improves their own speaking ability. One example of cooperation is the assignment method. With this approach, the ESL learners can not only study in school, but also learn from each other at any time outside of school.

The Teaching of English Listening & Speaking

To speak English well, in addition to mastering the necessary English knowledge, such as grammar and vocabulary, a lot of listening and speaking exercises are also required. Xiaoqing (2012) studied two methods about how to improve oral English. The first one is imitation. Xiaoqing suggested that English learners can practice more English listening, for example, listening to English tapes or English movies, which are great methods to improve pronunciation and intonation. The second one is repetition. Xiaoqing described that English learner could practice English speaking by repeating words and sentences many times and then they can speak out words and sentences without any hesitation (p. 2 & 3).

Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI)

All throughout the globe, the education system is under a significant threat from globalization and the fast development of technology. Hajimaghsoodi & Maftoon (2020) stated that teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and syllabus designers will benefit from being familiar with the beneficial benefits that CAL (computer-assisted learning) may have on developing language abilities and promoting interest, motivation, and collaboration among students. According to Habib et al. (2019), changes in the educational system have been made possible by the current trend of information revolution and knowledge explosion in technology. Using animations, music, demonstrations, and annotated photos, CAI provides a dynamic and educational teaching. A student-friendly atmosphere is provided by CAI, which allows for personalized learning and provides fast feedback that stimulates learners.

Project-Based Learning Approach

Recently, Project-based learning (PBL) has been used in a variety of ways in ESL training to help students improve their language learning and abilities. According to Puangpunsi (2021), PBL is a form of active student-centered instruction that emphasizes students' independence, meaningful research, decision making, cooperation, interaction, and ability to reflect within real-world practices by posing learners with problems or situations and motivating them to identify and implement solutions. Students were involved in a project-based exercise that allowed them to practice cooperation and teamwork. PBL integration in the classroom helps students to achieve meaningful objectives while also overcoming certain learning challenges (p.1). Sirisrimangkorn (2021) found that following the adoption of project-based learning, students' ability to communicate effectively increased dramatically. Furthermore, the students

reported good attitudes about project-based learning that included presenting since they believed it had assisted them in improving their public speaking abilities.

Blended Learning

"Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace" (Horn & Staker, 2011). Alebaikan and Troudi (2016) described that there are benefits to using blended learning for students who live far away or have other responsibilities that clash with their on-campus class schedule, i.e., increased student participation both in and out of the classroom. Besides, blended learning encourages active learning by ensuring that students arrive prepared and with relevant previous knowledge on the subject, resulting in a more rigorous, demanding, interesting, and thought-provoking classroom environment. According to Hussein Ai Noursi (2020), instructors are able to tailor their lessons to each student's talents and learning preferences. In addition, students may get comments and advice tailored to their specific activities rather than generic ones, making it possible for them to receive more tailored learning help.

Vocabulary Learning Strategy

Teng (2015) studied that the mastery of vocabulary knowledge is critical for the understanding and production of text and an integral part of learning a language. Consequently, for EFL students, vocabulary knowledge is essential since they must be able to grasp what they have read or heard in order to do so. Oxford (1990) identified two types of vocabulary-learning strategies: direct and indirect. Cognitive methods, memory strategies, and compensatory

strategies are examples of direct strategies, often known as learning the target language directly. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, help people acquire new words without focusing directly on the target language (Oxford, p.135). Social strategies, metacognitive self-planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation methods, and affective strategies are examples of indirect tactics.

Fan (2003) concentrated on the combined application of vocabulary acquisition methodologies. Her study found techniques for learning both high and low frequency phrases, as well as approaches to acquire vocabulary in general. The growth of vocabulary abilities is connected to changes in vocabulary learning methods, according to Gu (2010). Teachers should encourage students to use vocabulary-learning tactics on a more regular basis. Teng (2015) introduced two strategies in his study: indirect and direct vocabulary learning strategies. The degree of lexical knowledge was substantially connected with indirect techniques. It is clear that a greater degree of indirect methods is linked to the participants' vocabulary richness and depth, according to Teng (2015).

Conclusion

The ability to communicate in the target language is a critical skill for anyone learning a second language. When compared to other skills like writing, listening, and reading, speaking English as a foreign language is a difficult one. Chinese college students, as one of the primary groups of learners of English in China, face difficulty in developing spoken English. They can be loosely classified into two categories: internal motivations and external motivations. English professors and other scholars have performed much research and practice on how to overcome the obstacles college students face when speaking English or how to improve their oral English skills. These studies and techniques are quite narrow and straightforward, but they are extremely

beneficial for students' individual challenges. A blended learning approach, a learner-centered method that combines complementing face-to-face and online learning experiences to achieve learning goals, is necessary for effective implementation of teaching and improving Chinese college students' oral English proficiency.

Chapter 3: Project Design

In this chapter, I describe the process and rationale for developing a workshop for Chinese college English learners to improve their speaking abilities in the context of studying English as a second language, including approaches and practices. It is my hope that the workshop will provide teachers with an additional tool to aid in the planning of their practice stages of English-speaking sessions. It will help professors better deliver their lesson plans to college-level English students and help students enhance their English-speaking abilities.

On university campuses, the topics of college students' oral English often involve campus life and lectures. For these topics, college English teachers often use a variety of teaching methods, such as teacher-centered approach, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and online learning. Each of these teaching methods has its own advantages, but nowadays the learning forms and content of universities are becoming more and more complicated, and the challenges they are facing are increasing. There is an urgent need for a more flexible and effective teaching method, and blended learning is such a teaching method.

According to Horn and Staker (2011), "blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace" (p. 3). In order to give students a more tailored educational route, six models are introduced by Horn and Staker, they are: face to face driver, rotation, flex, online lab, self-blend and online driver. This blended learning uses a combination of face-to-face, teacher-led instruction and

digital technologies. The potential benefits of blended learning can be various. Horn and Staker (2011) discussed two benefits:1) a more consistent and tailored methodology that allows students to work at their own pace and assists each child in feeling comfortable and succeeding in school. 2) New school models that are more effective because they require fewer, but more specialized, instructors and make better use of available space (p. 6). This method of teaching and learning has the potential to improve student engagement by fostering greater social contact and reflection as well as higher order thinking, problem solving, and collaborative learning (Vaughan, 2014). Due to the availability of synchronous and asynchronous online learning choices, blended learning is becoming increasingly common in the educational world, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. I aim to use the blended learning method to create a teaching plan centered on university classroom lectures to demonstrate the blended learning approach's potential benefits in assisting college students in improving their spoken English. The following topics will be discussed:

1. The definition of blended learning approach.

2. The forms of blended learning approach.

3. The principles of blended learning approach

4. The process of blended learning approach

Chapter 4: Project

This project is a three-hour workshop, and its purpose is to guide Chinese college teachers to use the blended learning approach to teach Chinese college students oral English. The attendees to the workshops are Chinese college English teachers. These teachers have certain teaching experience. This workshop will be held on the teacher workday of the first week before the new school year so that teachers can use it in oral English teaching in the new school year.

Icebreaking activity:

Before the workshop starts, the instructor greets the participating teachers and welcomes everyone to participate in this workshop. The instructor will also introduce participants to the overview of the workshop (figure 1).

Figure 1

And the main goals (Figure 2):

- Reflect on planning and implementing speaking instruction in the daily classroom

- Identify differentiated speaking strategies for college students

- Observe blended learning lessons and identify key speaking strategies and skills

- Revisit the planning steps prior to the speaking implementation

- Action planning by using blended learning approach
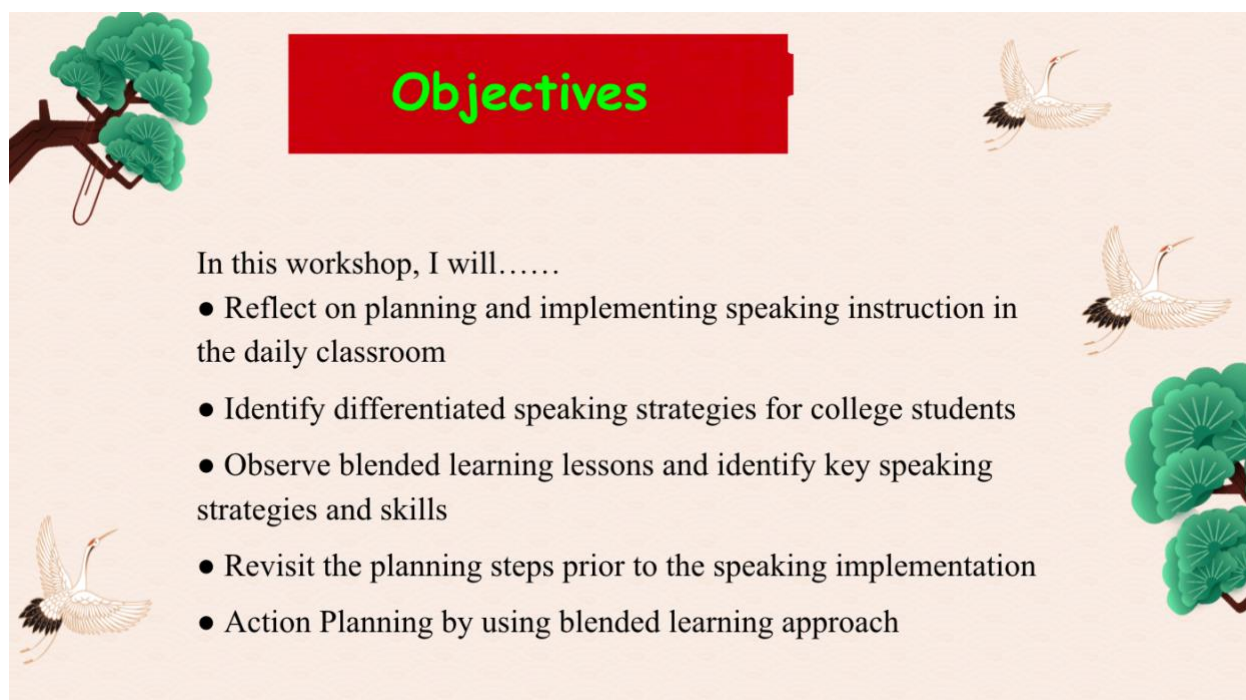
Figure 2

This is a three-hour workshop. The schedule is as follows: 10 minutes icebreaker activity, 10 minutes planning and implementation reflection, 30 minutes lower level and high-level students speaking strategies, 40 minutes blended learning approach, 30 minutes hands on activity

by groups, 30 Minutes sharing sample lessons by different levels, 15 minutes break and 15

minutes summary of the workshop and post survey completion.

When doing icebreaker activity, the instructor will design a padlet with four columns; each

column corresponds to a problem. See figure 3:
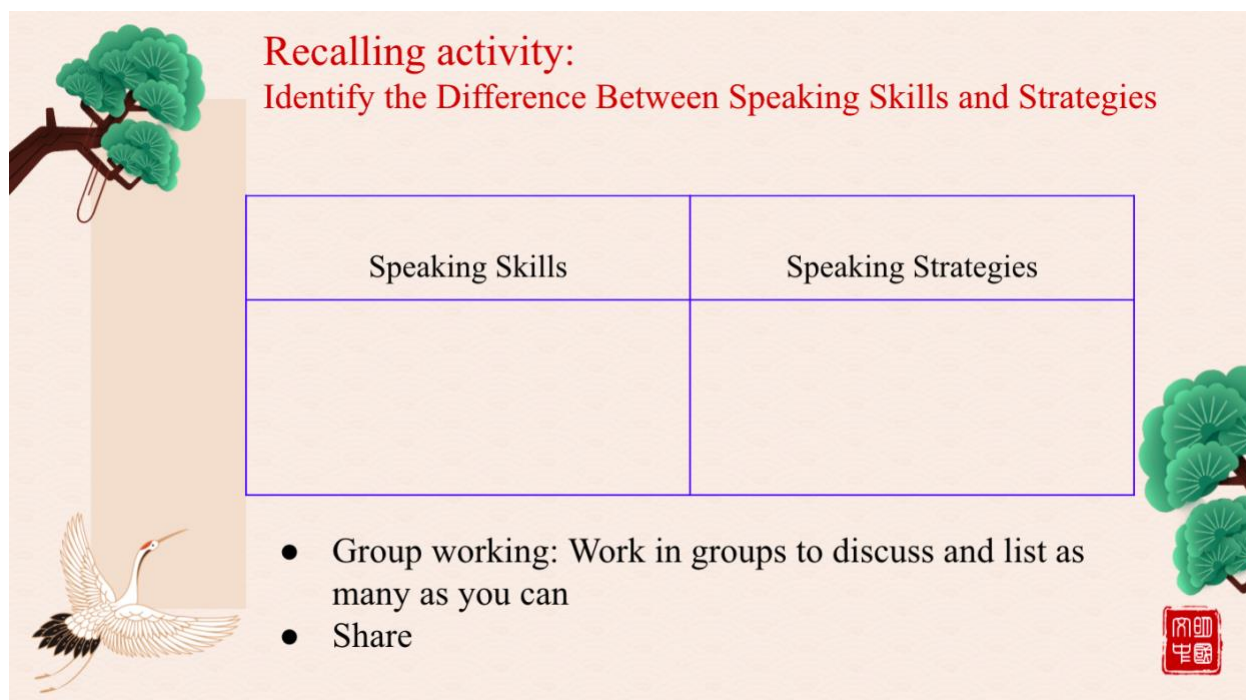
Figure 3

Every attendee needs a computer to work with. The instructor will post the questions and

then the attendees have 3 minutes to write their ideas. After exactly 3 minutes, the instructor will

use 4 minutes to read and share the attendees' ideas by column. By the end of the activity, the

attendees have 3 minutes to reflect and discuss with each other. The goal of this icebreaker

activity is to warm up and allow participants to have a short communication.

The goals of the Recalling activity are: 1) allow participants to recall and identify the

difference between speaking skills and strategies; 2) prepare for the next activity to discuss

strategies for students of different English proficiency levels. This activity is a group activity.

Participants are divided into different groups, with 4 people in each group. After the participants

discuss, one person puts the results of the group discussion on paper, and finally each group chooses one person to share the results of the group discussion. Participants have 10 minutes to discuss and summarize opinions. In addition, each group of participants has one minute to share (Figure 4). Before this activity, pens and papers will be provided on the table of each group in advance. After the group shares their opinions, the instructor will further illustrate Speaking Skills and Speaking Strategies with examples (Figure 5).

Figure 4

Figure 5

Next, the instructor will show participants the following questions: What are the key speaking strategies for different levels. Here, the students' speaking level is roughly divided into two levels: lower level and high level. Participants are divided into two groups: one group discusses lower level, and one group discusses high level. Participants were asked to choose a person who had not spoken before for pair work, and one person shared the results of the discussion on the padlet. Finally, the instructor selected two participants to read the key strategies for lower level and the key strategies for high level ideas shared on the padlet.

Figure 6

The goal of the Review and talk activity is to explain the concept of oracy to participants and expect participants to take oracy development as one of the goals of students' oral development. The instructor shows participants and explains the next question: what is the difference between oral language development and oracy development?

After that, the instructor asks the participants to discuss: what pedagogical practices have been identified in the literature for use in developing Chinese college students' oral English proficiency? The instructor will finally show the sharing results to the participants on padlet (Figure 7).
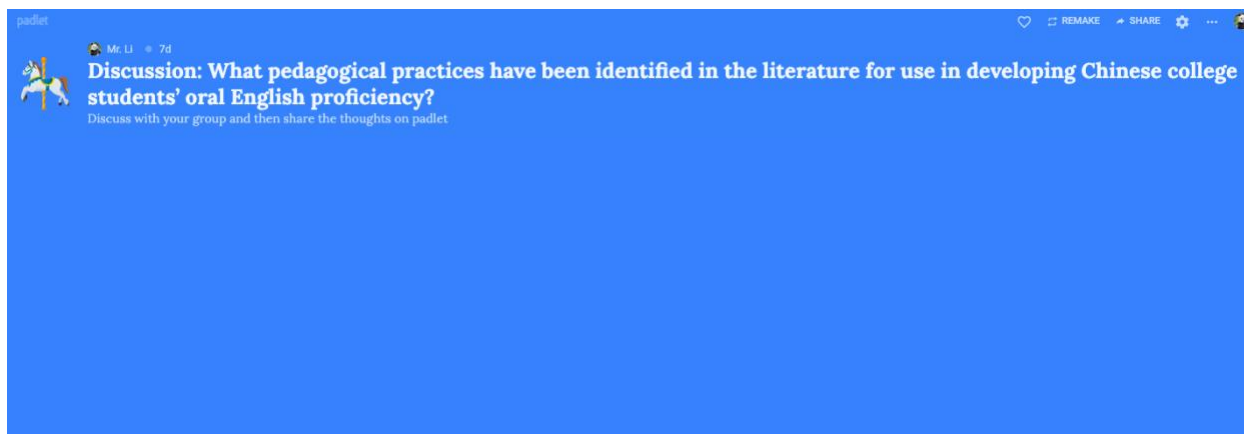
Figure 7

In the next section, a blended learning approach will be introduced. First of all, the attendees will observe three videos. The videos demonstrate what blended learning looks like at Columbia university. By watching these three videos, participants have a general understanding of the concept and practice of the blended learning approach. In addition, the instructor will compare traditional in-person learning, web-enhanced learning and blended learning. Through comparison, participants have a better understanding of the blended learning approach. Next, the instructor introduces the blended learning approach through four aspects:

- The definition of blended learning approach.

- The models of blended learning approach.

- The principles of blended learning approach

- The process of blended learning approach.

According to Horn and Staker (2011): "Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace." Horn and Staker (2011) introduced six models about blended learning approaches: face to face drive model; rotation model; flex model; online lab model; self-blend model and online

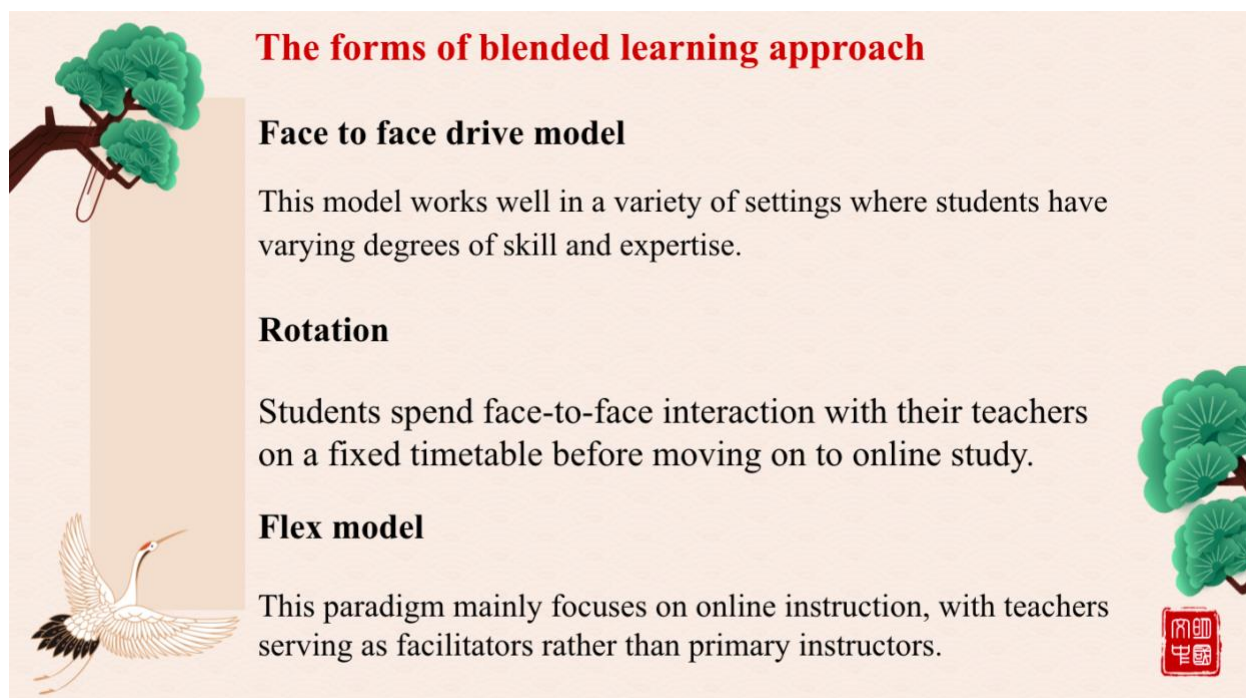driver model. Besides, the instructor will briefly introduce the six models with examples (Figure 8 and 9).
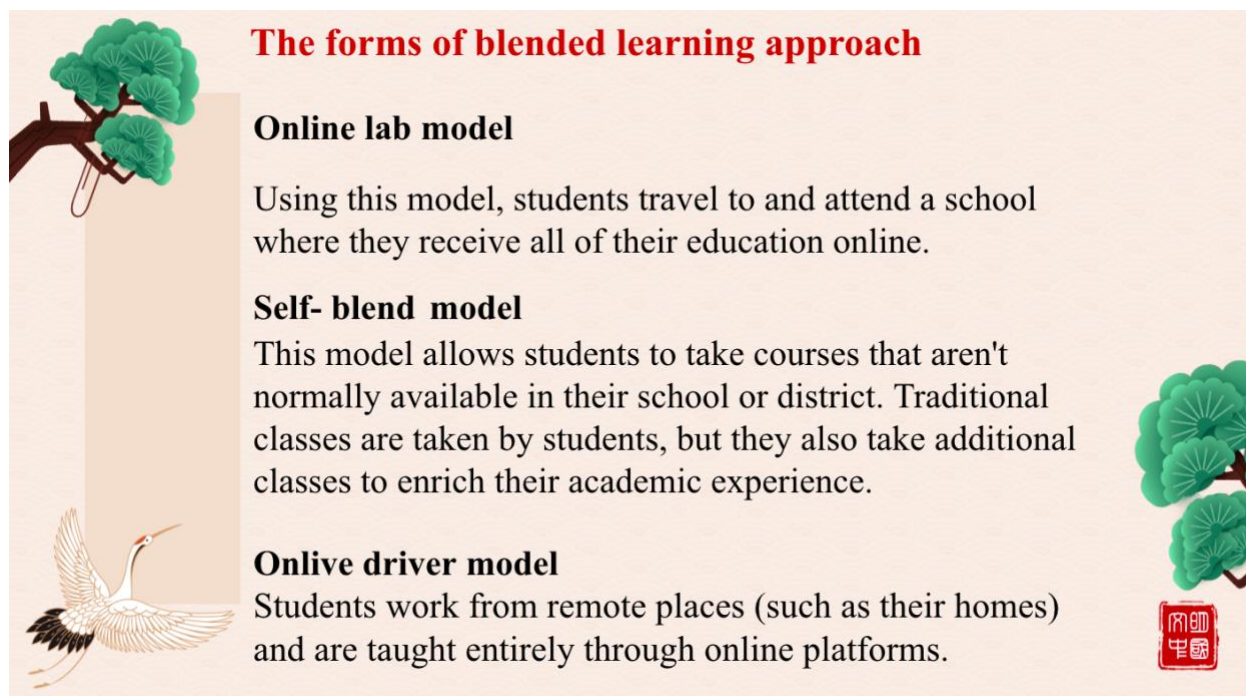

Figure 8

Figure 9

When using a blended approach for teaching, four blended approach principles will be

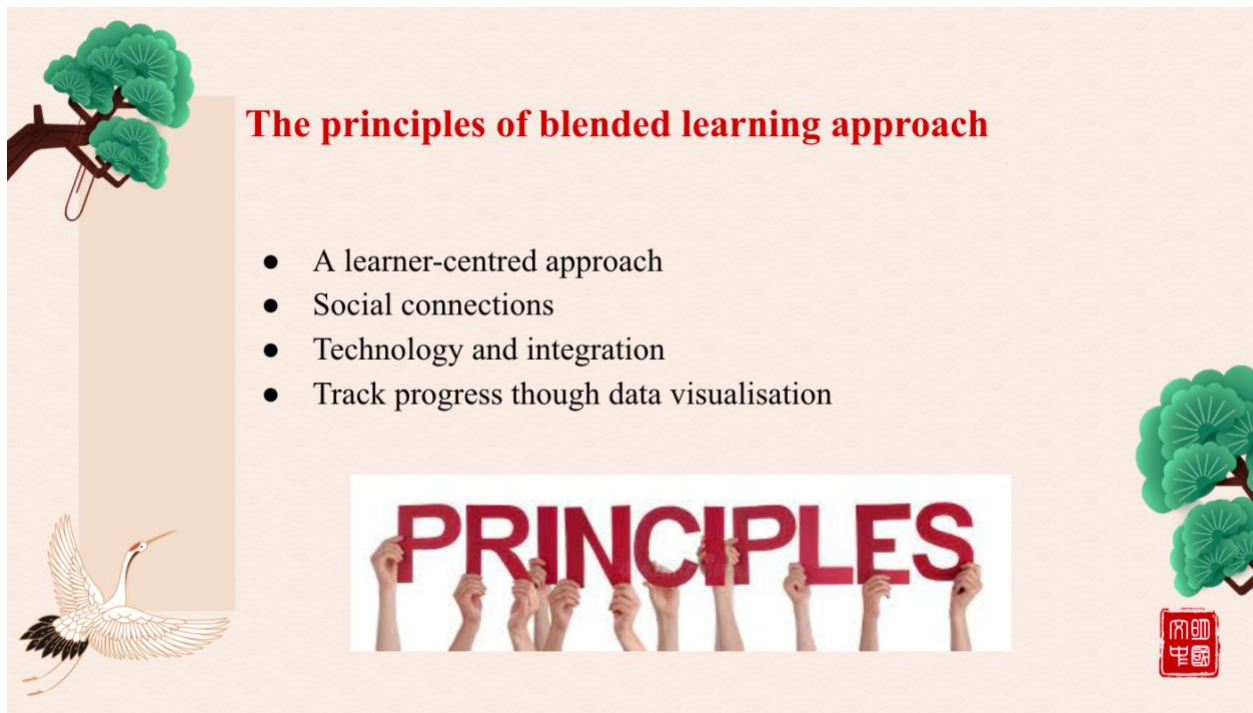introduced so that teachers can teach more efficiently (Figure 10):

Figure 10

Four components will be described when talk about the process of blended learning
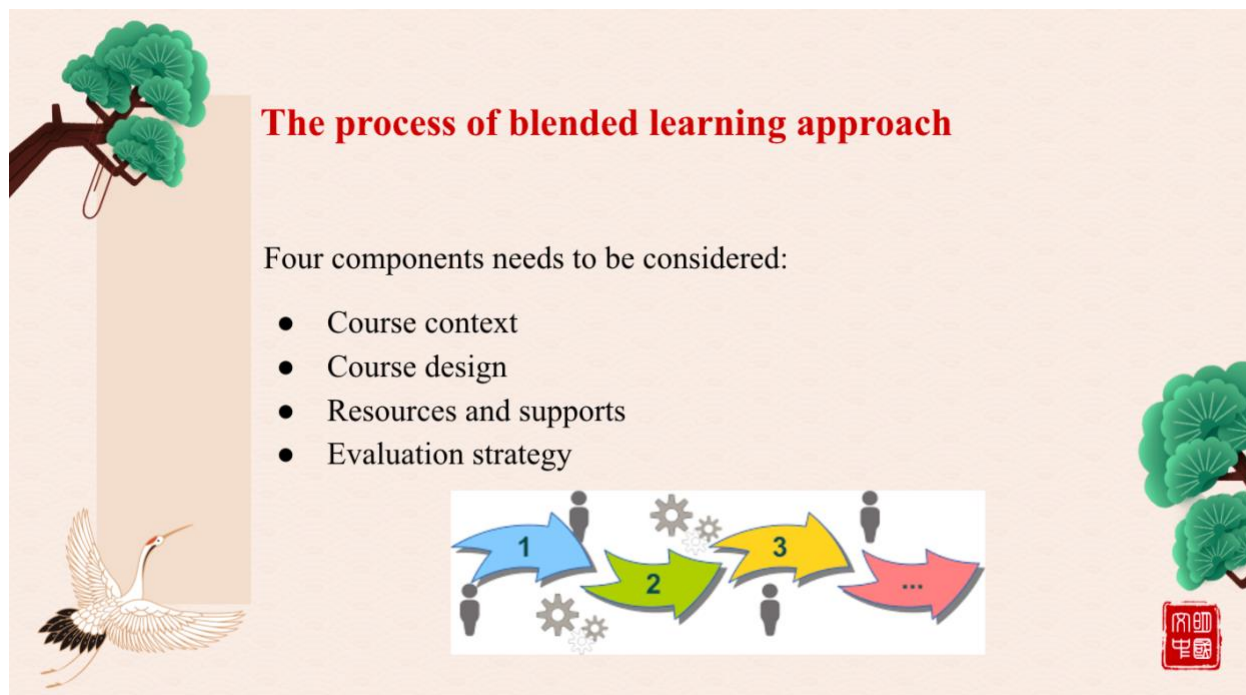
approach, see figure 11:

Figure 11

By introducing the process of blended learning approach, participants will know where to start blended learning and how to use the blended learning approach to practice teaching.

After introducing the blended learning approach, all participants have a 15-minute break.

After a 15-minute break, the attendees will watch two videos, observe the lesson; Take notes; Identify speaking skills, strategies and speaking activities; Think about what speaking objectives and oracy objectives designed in this lesson (Figure 12).
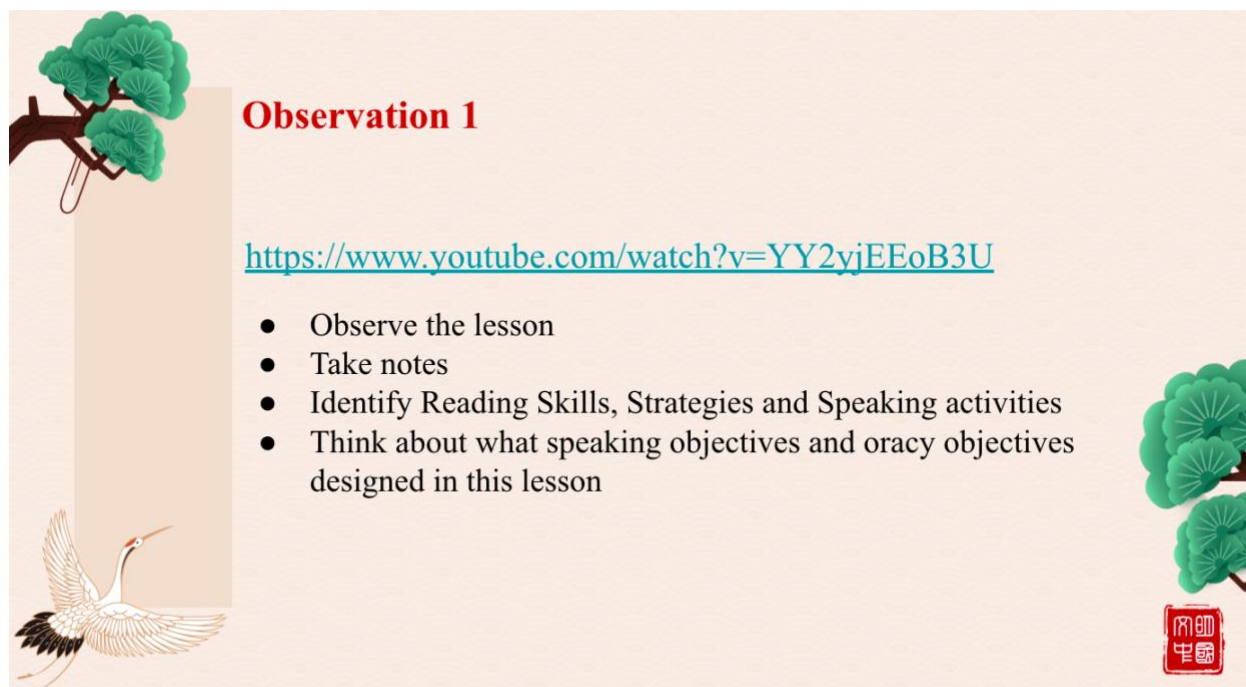
Figure 12

After the observation, the instructor will revisit the planning steps prior to the speaking implementation. There are 5 steps will be mentioned:

1. ➤ I consider all the standards

   ➤ I think every piece is important

2. ➤ I consider my students' speaking proficiency levels

3. ➤ Use blended approach

4. ➤ Plan out speaking objectives

5. ➤ I prepare at least 3 speaking strategies and some scaffolding activities for speaking

   lesson

Then the attendees will be divided into different groups according to grade levels (Figure 13).
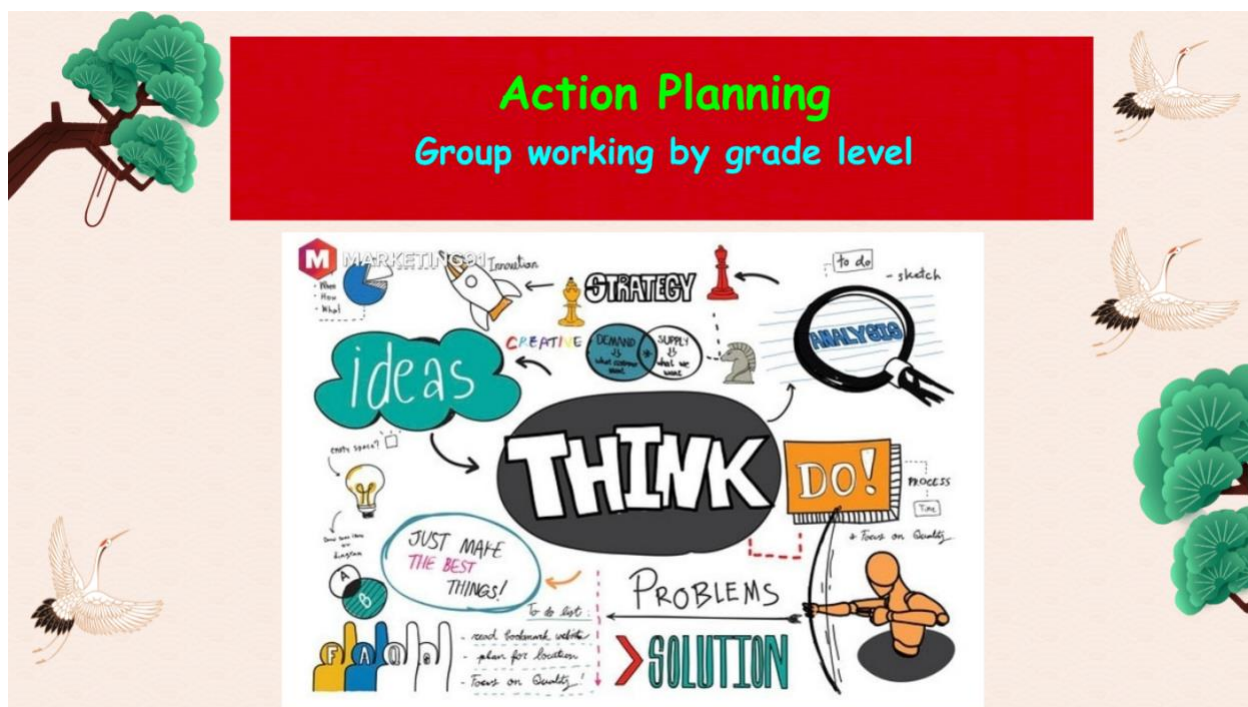

Figure 13

The attendees will use a blended learning approach to design an English-speaking teaching plan. This will take 30 minutes to complete. After that, each group will share their teaching plan by presenting.

At the end of the workshop, a post survey will be given to the attendees.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

As a result of globalization, English has risen to a very high level of dominance in foreign language education in China, and this upward trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. In China, as one of the main groups of English learning, Chinese college students have very uneven development in the four basic English skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). This paper's literature review summarized the difficulties encountered by Chinese college students in learning English, especially spoken English. The reasons can be roughly divided into internal reasons and external reasons. Among them, internal reasons mainly involve English learners' motivation, anxiety, and learning strategies; external reasons mainly involve English pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, differences between Chinese and English, and the opportunity and length of oral English practice.

The study examined the reasons for the difficulties of Chinese college students in English speaking learning and pedagogical approaches to assist Chinese college students in improving their English-speaking proficiency. There are numerous teaching methods for spoken English in practice, including the grammar translation method, which emphasizes the accuracy of grammar and semantics; the communicative method, which emphasizes the purpose of communication between language participants; the project-based learning approach, which emphasizes problem-solving from a holistic perspective; and the web-based learning approach, which emphasizes computer-based instruction. Each teaching approach has its own strengths and advantages, but for students with varying backgrounds and levels of oral competence, a more adaptable and

efficient teaching strategy is required. Therefore, this paper proposed a solution by using the blended learning approach.

If learners are unable to master oral English, which is one of the four English language skills, they will face lots of new difficulties. In the field of English language education, blended learning is becoming more popular as a pedagogical method of instruction. This technique will be beneficial to both ESL students and instructors. For students who have difficulty communicating in spoken English, blended learning can provide educational benefits by increasing student engagement in and outside of the classroom, meeting the needs of a diverse group of students, and providing more opportunities to form a learning community during the course.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that a blended learning strategy may aid among the development of communication skills in a variety of Chinese college students. Designing instructional frameworks that are responsive to the requirements of students might be accomplished via the use of blended learning approaches. When new technology and blended learning programs are used in classrooms, instructors must be informed, trained, and given the chance to analyze, assess, and adapt their pedagogy properly. More study might be done to examine how instructors can be better prepared to use a blended learning approach.

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